

For Immediate Release
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ABC Enforcement Agents Raid Moonshine Operation in Hancock County

Law enforcement agents with the Mississippi Alcohol Beverage Control seized and destroyed an illegal distillery in northwest Hancock County, December 11, 2006. Willie "Junior" Necaie, 63, of the Rocky Hill community was arrested and charged with possession of an illicit distillery and possession of non tax paid whiskey. Charges and hearing are pending in Hancock County Justice Court.

Mark Smith, Agent-In-Charge, said the illegal whiskey distillery was operational when discovered by ABC Agents after receiving information involving illegal whiskey activity at this location. The still had twenty-eight 55-gallon barrels containing more than 1500 gallons of mash. A 100-gallon stainless steel cooker was used to distill the moonshine whiskey producing 225 to 250 gallons of illegal whiskey a month.

Possession of an illegal distillery and making moonshine whiskey is a felony. Possession of non-tax paid whiskey is a misdemeanor. Persons arrested for moonshining can face up to three years for a first offense and longer for subsequent convictions.

Agents of the Mississippi Alcohol Beverage Control seized and destroyed twelve moonshine stills in Mississippi during the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2006. Chief Mark Hicks, director of ABC Enforcement, said "Finding a still takes more than just luck. The methods used to conceal them from law enforcement are passed down just like the recipes for moonshine."

Moonshine is a public health issue, Hicks warned. Moonshine is made under extremely unsanitary conditions and lead poisoning is possible. A still destroyed last year utilized a car radiator as a condenser. Additionally, the state loses thousands of dollars in liquor taxes for even a small operation over a year's time. The total tax fraud for the stills destroyed this past fiscal year was approximately \$2 million.

Photographs available upon request

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